

ELECTION FALLOUT: TORIES START A BRUTAL CIVIL WAR



OUT May's aides Nick Timothy and Fiona Hill

They controlled her brain... now we're left with a zombie premier

EXCLUSIVE

BY **TIM WALKER**
The Mirror's "Heckler" columnist

SPECIAL advisers Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy divided the four lobes of Theresa May's brain between them.

Every thought that the PM had originated with these little-known key aides.

Now they have gone, we do indeed have a zombie prime minister.

Almost exactly a year ago - when it had looked as if David Cameron and the Remainers were on course to win the EU referendum - I'd lunched with Fiona when we had talked about setting up a public relations company together.

I liked her. She has a wicked sense of humour. And she is an operator.

She had a job with a company called Lexington Communications but, since her enforced resignation as May's special adviser at the Home Office in 2014, after a row with Michael Gove, she was unfulfilled.

She doubted she'd ever return to politics.

She was still close to May, even though no longer officially in her employ, and she said her former boss' position as a Remainer in the referendum was - like her own - sincere.

GRIEVANCE

Given Timothy, her old Home Office colleague, was very much an Outer, it suggested May still finally came down on Fiona's side if the two disagreed.

Fiona clearly felt a sense of grievance against Gove after a row with him over alleged extremism in schools.

She was bemused Gove had positioned himself as an Outer during the referendum campaign as she said she had seen notes from him which made it clear he saw the value of the EU to Britain. I asked why she didn't make them public. She laughed.

Cameron's resignation after the vote on June 23 meant that Fiona finally got the challenge she was waiting for.

She had launched her campaign for May well before it began officially. On Twitter, she got TM4PM trending and made sure that when a potential rival like Gove made an error, it was seized on and tweeted about. She ended up in a continual monologue with May - addressed as "Boss" - but she was the one doing the talking.

Fiona could talk to May in a way that Timothy, as a man, never could. There was a "sisterhood" between them.

I was less than startled that one of the first things May did was to sack was her greatest enemy, Gove.

It was her time for vengeance.

A DEAD WOMAN WALKING

» May told to bring enemy Gove back into her Cabinet : PM will not survive to fight another election

BY **JACK BLANCHARD**
Political Editor

HUMBL Theresa May was last night forced to bring arch-rival Michael Gove back into the Cabinet after being branded a "dead woman walking".

The Prime Minister was ordered to revive Mr Gove's career and appoint a powerful Deputy Prime Minister by Tory grandees fuming at her botched election campaign.

She will be toppled by the Tories once MPs decide the time is right - in line with Winston Churchill's famous quote that a bad leader must be "poleaxed".

Yesterday's reshuffle was dubbed a "non-shuffle", with Mrs May too weak to sack any of her colleagues and ordered to bring back Mr Gove.

She axed him from the Cabinet when she became PM last summer after his knifing of Boris Johnson.

Mr Johnson last night made clear he has forgiven him, tweeting: "It's a GOVERNMENT of all the talents. Welcome back to Michael!" Mrs May

said of Mr Gove's appointment as Environment Secretary: "I've brought in talent from across the whole of the Conservative Party. I believe that's important."

"This is a Government that is going to be governing for everyone."

Mr Gove, who clashed bitterly with Mrs May over tackling extremism when she was Home Secretary, said that he had been taken by surprise when the invitation came to visit No10. "I



Puppet forced to gorge on humble pie

genuinely didn't expect this role," he said. "I am delighted to be part of the Government. I am delighted to be able to support Theresa May to ensure that we have a Government capable of delivering on the people's wishes."

Party chiefs also confirmed Mrs May will have to ditch much of the manifesto, as she does not have the MPs to get it through.

She will face furious backbenchers at a meeting of the Tories' 1922

committee tonight after MPs return to Westminster.

"Theresa May is a dead woman walking," former Chancellor George Osborne said on the BBC's Andrew Marr Show. "It's just how long she's going to remain on death row."

Tory MPs openly speculated that she could be ousted within weeks but the PM was given a stay of execution by Cabinet colleagues. They fear her removal could trigger another election, and that Labour would then win a majority.

Instead she was ordered by senior ministers to scrap a big reshuffle and to bring in a Deputy PM to act as the

ANALYSIS

BY **JACK BLANCHARD**, POLITICAL EDITOR



relished sending him to the backbenches last summer - telling him to learn a thing or two about loyalty after his backstabbing of Boris Johnson.

But last night it was Mrs May eating humble pie as she was ordered by

THERE can be no greater symbol of Theresa May's collapsing authority than the sight of Michael Gove strolling into Downing Street last night.

It will have stuck badly in her craw to revive the career of the man she despised above all others during her six years as Home Secretary.

They clashed repeatedly during their time together in Cabinet and she



LAME DUCK
PM Theresa May and husband Philip go to church yesterday

The loyalties which centre upon (the leader) are enormous. If he trips, he must be sustained. If he makes mistakes, they must be covered. If he sleeps, he must not be wantonly disturbed. If he is no good, he must be poleaxed - WINSTON CHURCHILL

Cabinet's link to No10.

She had already been forced to sack her closest aides Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy by ministers who said she must change the way she operates or resign immediately. "We're going to see, I hope, more collective decision-making in the Cabinet," Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon told the Marr Show.

"I and other senior colleagues have made that clear."

Mrs May's choice for her deputy

was her close pal Damian Green, the Work and Pensions Secretary. He was given the title of First Secretary of State previously held by George Osborne and William Hague.

Mr Green was replaced at the DWP by Treasury Secretary David Gauke, who is seen as a safe pair of hands.

His replacement at the Treasury is gaffe-prone Justice Secretary Liz Truss, who in turn was replaced by Commons leader David Lidington.

The new Commons leader is Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom - clearing the way for Brexiteer Mr Gove's unlikely return to the top of Government. Anti-EU ministers and

MPs ordered her to bring him back as the price for their continuing support. She had considered sacking a succession of key

ministers including Chancellor Philip Hammond, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and International Trade Secretary Liam Fox but was left too weak to carry out the wider reshuffle she had planned.

Mr Johnson was forced to deny as "tripe" widespread reports he was considering a bid to topple Mrs May and install himself as PM.

It was reported that five Cabinet ministers had offered to back him if he decided to challenge her.

But in a WhatsApp message to Tory MPs leaked to ITV, Mr Johnson wrote: "Folks we need to calm down and get behind the Prime Minister. She won more votes than anyone since Margaret Thatcher." He added that the public "do not want another election".

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley, a



CLASHES

Michael Gove is back in the Cabinet



TRUSTED

Damian Green is an ally of Mrs May



CAPABLE

David Gauke is a safe pair of hands



BACKING

Boris Johnson denied he wants PM job

close ally of Mrs May, also rallied round, telling Sky News: "This is not the time for sharks to be circling. This is the time for us to come together."

But privately Tory MPs are certain that Mrs May will not be around for long - and certainly won't be there to fight another election.

One, Tory moderate Nicky Morgan, said she expects a leadership contest within weeks. "I suspect it could be this summer. Theresa May cannot fight another general election."

Tory grandee Lord Heseltine said: "She'll never lead the Conservative Party into another election but there is no immediate need for a change."

Graham Brady, who chairs the 1922 backbenchers' committee, warned tonight's meeting could be stormy. He told the BBC's Westminster Hour: "I'm sure there will be lots of colleagues wanting to air their concerns about the way the campaign was run."

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SHAKEN Theresa May speaks at the count in her Berkshire constituency

Tears are shed during party's night of horror

A TORY staff member was physically sick and Theresa May burst into tears as the party's election night horror unfolded, it emerged yesterday.

The humiliated Prime Minister also cried before visiting the Queen, having earlier welled up addressing party activists.

Mrs May was in her constituency home in Maidenhead with husband Philip and aide Fiona Hill when the exit poll predicting a hung Parliament came out at 10pm on Thursday.

The PM reportedly sat in "stony-faced silence" and took almost a minute to say anything.

Back in London, there was "deathly silence" at Conservative campaign headquarters as activists blinked in disbelief, according to one account.

One worker gagged and "keeled over" as the full disaster emerged, according to The Sunday Times.

"Shaken" Mrs May arrived at Tory HQ in Westminster at 4.30am.

"When she came in it looked as if she was going to break down in tears," one of those present said.

May told staff: "It's not the result we wanted but we will try to form a government."

Hours later, she reportedly shed tears again before her sobering audience with the Queen.

"She was crying before she went to the palace," a source said.

Upon her return the ashen-faced PM spoke to the nation from Downing Street, revealing plans to plough on despite her polling day nightmare.

1922 'men in suits' the key to survival

THERESA May is set for a showdown with the Conservative 1922 Committee - the powerful panel of backbenchers which holds the Prime Minister's fate in its hands.

The shadowy group, known simply as "the 22", first met in 1922 and now meets weekly in Parliament.

It is home to the "men in suits", who are tasked with quietly telling a party leader it is time to quit rather than forcing an open challenge.

It has an 18-member executive committee. Chairman Graham Brady is the keeper of letters written by backbenchers calling for a no-confidence vote in their leader. If he gets letters from 15% of MPs - 47 - a leadership race will be triggered.